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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

## BRIEFING MEMORANDUM

S/S P

June 15, 1979

TO: The Secretary

FROM: HA - Patricia M. Derian

Study Mission to Argentina by the Association of  
the Bar of the City of New York

Attached is a copy of the report of the New York Bar's study mission, led by Orville Schell, which visited Argentina in April. The report confirms many of the grim accounts we have received from many other sources about the human rights situation in Argentina.

The report reviews Argentina's State of Siege provision, concluding that extended PEN (National Executive Power) detentions are "highly questionable." It also states that the regime is without authority to deny prisoners the constitutionally guaranteed "right of option" -- the right to choose exile rather than political imprisonment. It discusses prison conditions and the role, so far quite limited, of the Argentine bar and judicial system in challenging or restricting abuses. It is generally pessimistic about future progress.

The most significant part of the report, however, is its review of the situation of Argentina's "disappeared" whose ranks include numerous lawyers:

"There is no question that since March 24, 1976, groups of armed people serving in military, police, or other state security forces have abducted thousands of people, subjecting most of the victims to torture, killing many, holding others in concentration camps or other secret places, and withholding from their families and all the world word either of their whereabouts or of whether they remain alive." (p. 26).

The report terms the fate of the "disappeared" "the most starkly brutal human rights violations in Argentina or, indeed, almost anywhere in the world that seeks to be

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/TPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

☒ Release ☐ Excise ☐ Deny

Exemption(s):

Declassify: ☐ In Part ☐ In Full
☐ Classify as ☐ Extend as ☐ Downgrade to

Date

Reason

82 D103

Box 17404

civilized." There has been no accounting on the missing, and the report sees few signs of progress in government circles toward curbing the practice or even facing the problem (pp. 31, 36). Disappearances continue (p. 27).

Attachment:

Report of the Mission  
of Lawyers to Argentina  
April 1-7, 1979

Drafted:HA:DMartin  
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